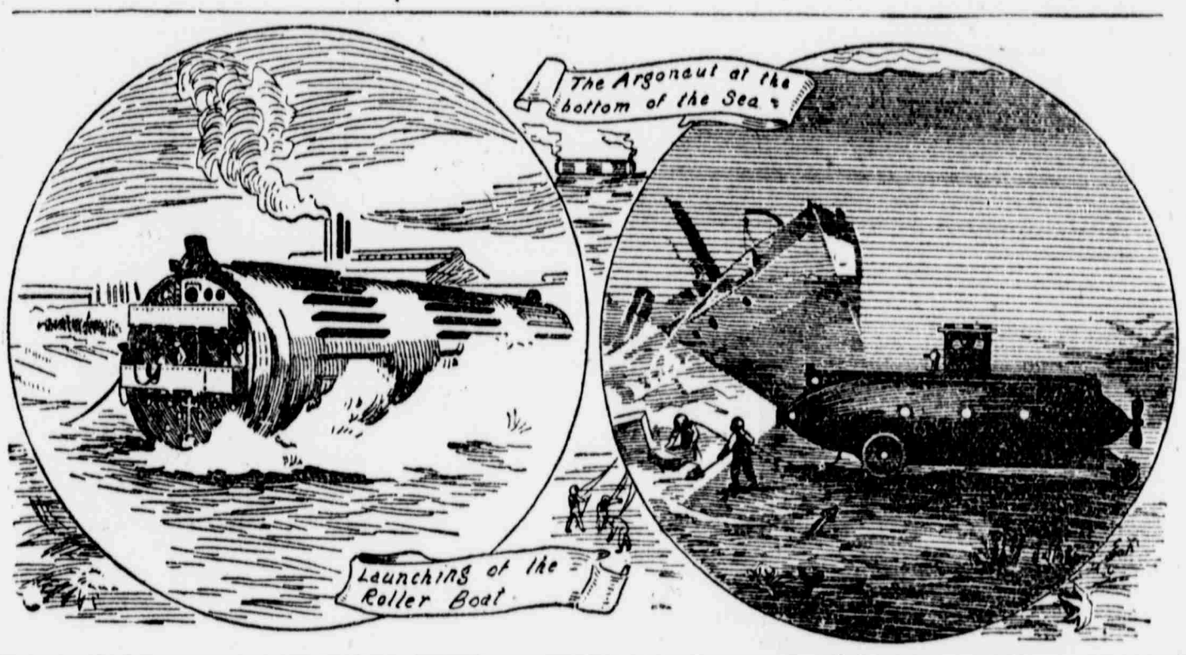
TWO OF THE QUEEREST CRAFT EVER CONSTRUCTED.

A few weeks ago there was launched from the yards of the Columbian Iron Works, of Baltimore, the Argonaut, a queer looking submarine craft, which goes on wheels like a wagon.

This vessel, which is the invention of a Baltimorean, Simon Lake, is, as far as intentions and appearance are concerned, unique. It is intended for commercial work, including the exploration of the bottom of rivers, lakes, bays and even seas, for treasure-seeking and other purposes of a kindred character.

The vessel presents a curious appearance. The cigar-shaped hull has two big iron wheels attached to it near the bow. These wheels are about as large as an ordinary cartwheel, and are of solid metal. The edges of the wheels are corrugated and cogged like those of a cogwheel. A smaller wheel of a similar character is attached to the boat at the stern. The wheels are intended to enable the vessel to run along over the bottoms of rivers and other bodies of water, the propeller of the vessel supplying the necessary motive power. The boat will be so arranged that the divers can come in and go out of the vessel while she is on the bottoms of rivers.



The Argonaut, says the New York Journal, is thirty-six feet long and nine feet in diameter, built of steel and strongly ribbed, to resist the water pressure. She is propelled along the bottom by an electric motor taking current from a powerful storage battery.

A strong electric searchlight is located in the bow, capable of lighting up a pathway in front of the craft as she moves along the bed of the ocean. Lenses are also arranged to project a beam of light to either side of the boat, so that objects may be seen in the vicinity of the vessel as she passes along.

Her speed is estimated to be about eight miles an hour on the surface and about five miles on the bottom. She will have an electric storage capacity for a run of about 2000 miles. The crew will consist of a captain, an engineer and four divers. It is claimed that one man can handle her if necessary.

When not engaged in saving valuables from wrecks along the coast, she is to run on the surface of the sea with her string of barges like a tugboat and her tow. She is also to sink herself and barges to the bottom of the coast and run over the hard sands as if she were a locomotive with a train of cars.

The inventor of the craft proposes to look for some of the 2000 vessels sunk and the $100,000,000 lost annually at sea. The boat may also be used in laying foundations for piers, lighthouses, bridges, docks, breakwaters, etc. She may also make journeys among beds of coral and sponge for business purposes, or to take down scientific and pleasure parties for an inside view of old Neptune. The boat is to be able to descend to a depth of 300 feet or more, and is to be sunk or raised at the will of the operator,

The Argonaut will make her trial trip in the Chesapeake Bay during the next few weeks. Probably the first vessel that the inventor will attempt to find is the New Era which went down off Asbury Park, N. J., in 1852, with 200 passengers and a large amount of specie aboard.

Another queer craft which electricity has made possible, and which Inventor Knapp, who constructed it, believes will revolutionize the speed of ocean travel, was recently launched at Toronto. It is called the roller boat and is certainly a novelty, though not exactly the first of its kind.

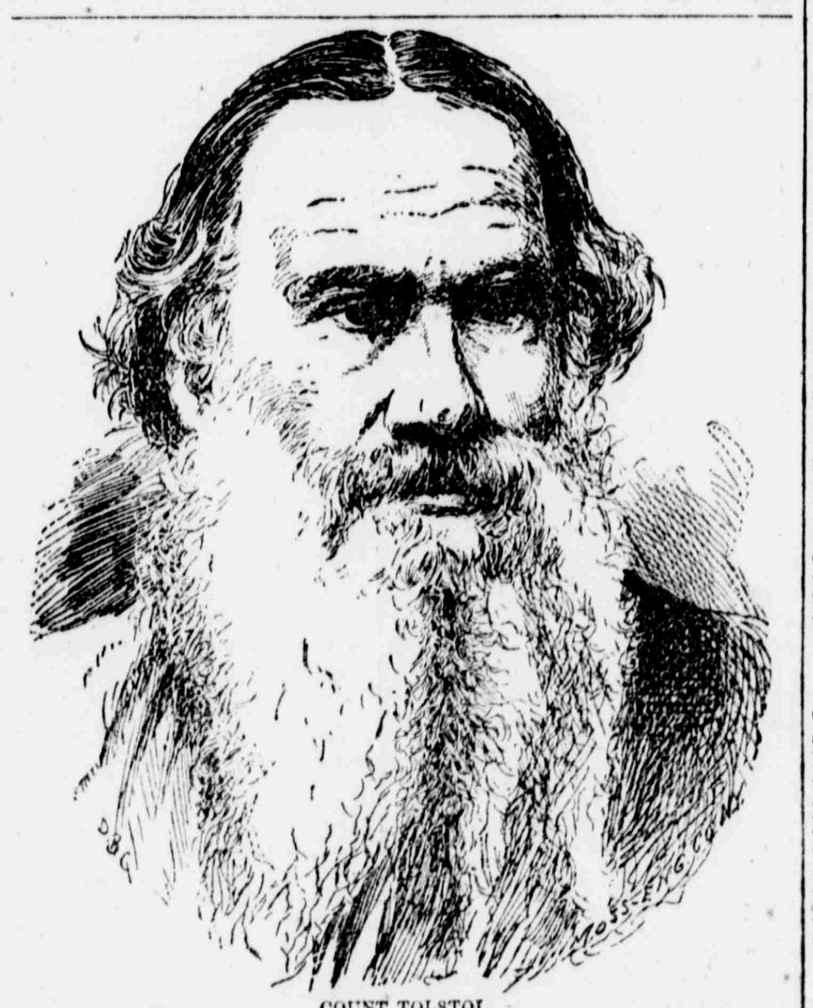
Owing to the strange nature of the craft a large crowd gathered to see the mass of steel drop, or rather roll, into the water. No doubt many of them expected to see the boat disappear out of sight below the waves, but in this they were disappointed. Preparatory to the launching the huge bulk of cylindrical steel rested on stocks about ten feet back from the edge of the slip, and in order to launch her slides, well greased with soft soap, were built from the stocks to the edge of the water. When all was ready planks were removed until the cylinder was held by but a single support, and at a given signal this was knocked away. Slowly the cylinder started down the soapy incline, and then, moving a little faster, it leaped into the water with a great splash. The waves it caused leaped high on the opposite side of the slip and the crowd there was very freely sprinkled. Over and over the craft rolled until she touched the opposite side of the slip, and when all was quiet on the water it was seen that she drew but a little over two feet of water.

The craft just launched is but a trial ship. Mr. Knapp's ideal for passenger service would be about 150 feet in diameter and nearly 800 feet long, with engines that would make 600 revolutions a minute. The trial boat is only twenty-two feet in diameter and 100 feet long, and tapers to fifteen feet, so that each end is kept well out of the water. As it is a passenger boat it will be the strangest ever floated. The passengers will be on a platform on the inside, swinging from the shaft, with the wheels of the engine gravitating against the inside of the cylinder. The paddles which will propel the ship will be fastened in rows on the outside of the cylinder.—New York Journal.

COUNT TOLSTOI.

Sketch of the Career of the Great Russian Novelist and Social Reformer.

Count Lyof Nickolaivitch Tolstoi, the most prominent of the Russian novelists, is also a social reformer. His great ancestor was Peter Tolstoi, the friend of Peter the Great. The author of "Anna Karenina" is now nearly seventy. "Anna Karenina" is pronounced Tolstoi's masterpiece. Of Anna herself George Meredith says she is the most perfectly depicted female character in all fiction. Tolstoi believes in the literalness of the words of Jesus. He holds that the only rule of life is the precise living up to the maxims of the Sermon on the Mount. As a youth Tolstoi attended the University of Kazan, and at the age of twenty-three he entered the army and went with his brother to the Caucasus. He fought in the Crimean War, and at its close resigned his commission and devoted himself to literature. One of his earliest works, "War and Peace," is most appraised by Russians. It deals with the invasion of Russia by Napoleon. Since he brought out "Anna Karenina" in 1876 Tolstoi has given himself up to social problems, with the hope of supplying mankind with a better moral and religious philosophy than that which now obtsins in the world. "Kreutzer Sonata" appeared in 1890, presenting a certain theory of morals which so shocked some eminent Christians in America that it was "raided" by the authorities. In 1892 Count Tolstoi finished his autobiography, which, with his diaries, he deposited with the Rumyanzoff Museum.



COUNT TOLSTOI.

A Berlin man makes a living by breeding rats for vivisectionists.

TRAVELING IN A HOUSE ON WHEELS.

A Family's Long and Novel Journey Across the Continent.

A house on wheels is on its way to New York City. While at Morrisville, N. Y., the owner, M. E. A. Laskey, said he had traveled from Port Angeles, Wash. A cyclometer attached to a wheel gave the distance covered as 6321 miles.

THE HOUSE ON WHEELS.

The house is occupied by a man and wife and five children, two of whom were born on the road. The house is twelve feet long and six feet high and is entirely home-made. Inside are a folding table, a camp stove, a high chair, rocking chair, folding bed and other conveniences.

The family left Port Angeles on March 22, 1894, and has been on the road ever since.

RIDING A SEA MONSTER.

Florida Boys Have Fun With Huge Sea Turtles.

Florida boys have one kind of exciting sport which the young folks of more northern lands know little about. It consists in catching the huge sea turtles which frequent the bays along the Southern coasts of Florida. The turtles, from which is made the green turtle soup so familiar to restaurant fare, are confined by the fishermen in huge pens or "turtle-crawls," consisting of fences extending from the shore out into the water. When the fisherman wants a great turtle for market one of the boys, whose shiny brown body is stripped bare, stands in the prow of the boat as it is pushed from the shore. He watches intently, and presently he sees one of the big turtles taking a nap on the clear white sand of the bottom. He dives quickly, and, swimming down from behind, seizes the turtle firmly by the shell. Of course the turtle wakes up and like a bucking broncho begins to dash and plunge wildly about, seeking to throw its plucky rider. Not succeeding in this, it darts quickly to the surface, where the boy gets his first breath. Then down again it goes tearing through the water and beating the foam with its flippers. But its rider never lets go for a moment, and presently the great turtle grows exhausted, and the boy, by lifting on the front end of the shell forces it to the boat, where it is quickly loaded aboard and taken away to market. It is great sport, and the boys enjoy it as much as our Western boys like a lively young pony to ride.

A STEED OF THE SEA.

The Pickpocket Got Hold of a Snake.

Ex-Representative Harvey Horner, of Sumner County, is a snake tamer and usually carries around with him in his pocket a live bull snake with which he makes lots of fun. A pickpocket "touched" Horner at the circus at Wichita Monday and happened to get his hand into the pocket where the snake was kept. The shock made him scream and Horner held him until the police arrived.—Kansas City Times.

A Wonderful Bridge.

In the Forth Bridge there is a horizontal pull of 10,000 tons on the chief spans, and a weight of 100,000 tons on their bases. Half a dozen British ironclads might be hung upon them without causing any undue strain.

SCIENTIFIC SCRAPS.

A patient who remained absolutely unconscious for four and a half months in Germany furnishes the longest continued cataleptic sleep known to science.

An electric locomotive in a Scranton, Penn., coal mine in 200 days did work for $2528 below what the work cost for a corresponding period with mule power. An electric pump in the same mine saved $1513 over steam pumps in 970 days.

Falcon Island, in the Friendly group, was first noted as a shoal in 1867. In 1877 smoke was rising from the sea over the shoal. In October, 1885, an island 3700 meters long and 75 meters high had formed, and a tremendous eruption was in progress. The height was 90 meters in 1887. The ashes having rapidly washed away, leaving a height of but eight meters in 1892, and the island is fast disappearing.

The interesting experiment of making mercury float on water is accomplished by Mr. C. E. Stromeyer by shaking together in a cylindrical bottle a few drops of mercury, half an ounce of water and a pinch of red lead, vermillion or other red powder. At first a few small globules of mercury collect in the centre of the water's surface, but after repeated shakings a large number of the globules float together in the form of a small dish about three-eighths of an inch across and one-sixteenth of an inch deep.

An incandescent lamp of three or four candle power is used by M. Paul Noel, a French entomologist, for capturing insects that swim in ponds at night. The lamp is connected by wires to a small storage battery on the bank of the pond, weighted by a semicircle of iron, and placed over a net having an opening two feet and a half across. The net is of coarse packthread, closed by a string. The weighted lamp and the net are slowly sunk in the water, the lamp is lighted, and insects, fish, frogs, tadpoles and larvæ of every kind rush up to it. The string is pulled, quickly capturing several pounds of victims.

According to Nikola Tesla, as reported in Industries and Iron, "of all conceivable methods of generating electrical energy, nothing in the present nor in the future is likely to compare in facility and economy with the waterfall. Of all methods of generating power, the utilization of a waterfall, he says, is the simplest and least wasteful. According to him, even if it were possible, by combining carbon in a battery, to convert the work of the chemical combination into electrical energy with very high economy, such mode of obtaining power, he thinks, would be no more than a mere makeshift, bound to be replaced sooner or later by a more perfect method which required no consumption of any material whatever.

Klondikers.

It is a good-natured, sober crowd we have aboard the steamship. Several have remarked how very undemonstrative it is. Of our passengers one-half are Americans. They are of every degree and of all sorts but dudes. There is a house builder from Brooklyn, a contractor from Boston, the business manager of a New York paper, and boys that seem not over nineteen. They have all formed parties or partnerships, some to share every vicissitude or fortune, others only to last until the gold-diggings are reached. Only a few are dressed in the loose rough clothes of the miner. Several that I know who are going in have kept on their city suits, and it has been amusing to see men unaccustomed to rough garments emerge, one by one, from their staterooms with their miner's rig of heavy boots and corduroys. One most picturesque figure is a swarthy man of spare but wiry build, who turned out in full buckskin suit, at which some smiled; but after a talk with him it was impossible not to admit that while the buckskin might "draw" somewhat in wet weather, nevertheless he was as well fixed as any man on board. He is a packer and hunter, and hails from the Black Hills, and has a partner seven feet tall.

One noticeable thing is the total absence of oaths or the sort of language one will hear continually from morn till night among lumbermen. The conversation is pitched in a low key; men have serious things to talk about—those they have left behind; the pass ahead of them; their outfits and those of their neighbors. Some are pretty well equipped; indeed, save for a general lack of waterproof sacks, they are well prepared for the rainy country, which, by the lowering clouds and increasing banks of fog, we seem to be entering.—Harper's Weekly.

Brief and Brilliant Career.

Wayworn Watson—I never told you I'd seen the time when I lived at the rate of $10,000 a year, did I?

Perry Patettic—No. How long did you keep it up?

"About a minute."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

John Howells, son of the novelist, William Dean Howells, recently received a diploma in architecture from a Paris institution, where he had been a student five years.